

**CONNECTICUT  
GUIDELINES FOR  
TEACHER EVALUATION  
AND  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Connecticut State Department of Education**

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## ***PREFACE***

The State Board of Education is committed to ensuring that all Connecticut students achieve at higher levels in school and become more productive and more responsible citizens. This is a shared responsibility, involving students, parents, teachers, administrators, employers, community members, local school boards, and state and local government. All students are expected to learn more--and learn it better--than ever before. We must also expect as much from our educators as from our students. These expectations are reflected in Goal Three of *Nurturing the Genius of Connecticut's Students: Connecticut's Comprehensive Plan for Education 1996-2000*:

“to set and meet high standards for the performance of teachers and administrators leading to and evidenced by improved student learning.”

The Connecticut Guidelines for Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development will assist districts in accomplishing these goals.

# **Guidelines for Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development**

## **Context**

Connecticut Statutes related to teacher evaluation and professional development are attached in Appendix A.

These guidelines replace the teacher evaluation and professional development guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education on December 7, 1993. The new guidelines are designed to build on and strengthen Connecticut's unwavering commitment to equity and excellence in education.

Three Connecticut State Department of Education publications frame the contents of the new guidelines:

1. *Connecticut's Common Core of Learning (CCL)*, which clearly establishes high expectations for learning for *all* of Connecticut's children;
2. *Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching (CCT)*, which defines effective teaching practice throughout the career continuum of teachers—from *pre-service*, through *induction*, as well as for the evaluation and continued professional development of experienced teaching staff. This replaces the 15 Connecticut Teaching Competencies as Connecticut's definition of effective teaching practice.
3. *The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards*, which establish student content and performance standards across all disciplines by grade span (e.g., K through 4, 5 through 8, 9 through 12).

Using these documents as the foundation for teacher evaluation and professional development establishes a critical link between effective teaching and increased student learning. The district's school improvement initiative will become more effective and coherent when teacher evaluation and school improvement processes are integrated with an on-going systematic staff development strategy.

## **Introduction**

"One of the greatest challenges facing the United States as it looks toward the new millenium is the development of human capacity, specifically, the need for a highly educated, globally aware community of citizens who can lead the country into an era of increasing technological, moral, scientific, political and social complexity. Chief among the developers of our nation's human capacity are teachers, who, along with parents, share responsibility for the growth of knowledge among the nation's more than 50 million school-age youth." (*The Numbers Game - Ensuring the Quantity and Quality in the Teaching Workforce*, NASBE, October, 1998.)

To ensure that *all* students have competent, high-quality teachers, we must develop an evaluation and support structure that builds human capacities and challenges all educators to aspire to and reach excellence.

However, while we expect more from today's teachers, there is growing evidence that the investment in the professional development of teachers (building human capacity) is woefully inadequate and often is viewed by many people in the public and private sectors as not cost beneficial. Business and industry appears to have just the opposite view. They spend considerable dollars on training and building human capacity to maintain profitability and competitiveness.

In summary, the central focus of Connecticut's guidelines is the investment in ongoing teacher professional development in order to improve student learning. In the design of the teacher evaluation and professional development guidelines, the following principles were used to guide this effort:

- Student learning is directly affected by teacher competence;
- Teacher competence is positively affected by the integration of teacher evaluation and professional development;
- Teachers, like students, must be continual learners;
- An effective evaluation plan requires a clear definition of teaching and learning and a system to assess it; and
- The gaps between expectations for student performance and actual student performance should guide the content of professional development.

## **I. Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development Guidelines**

*All teacher evaluation and professional development plans should:*

- 1a. **Show a clear link between teacher evaluation and professional development and improved student learning.**

Improvement of student achievement is a critical goal of teacher evaluation and professional development plans. The capacity of teachers to improve student learning—whether as individuals, as members of small groups, as well as members of a schoolwide community—needs to be strengthened. Teacher evaluation and professional development plans need to focus on improving student learning and should be jointly determined by teachers and administrators. In addition, professional development plans should have provisions for evaluating their effectiveness in changing teachers' classroom practice and

improving student learning.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, professional development plans should permit both independent and collaborative endeavors as well as be designed to support the creativity of all teachers.

- 1b. **Use *Connecticut's Common Core of Learning, The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards*, the CMT/CAPT Assessments, as well as locally-developed Curriculum Standards as the basis for establishing learning goals at the district and school levels.**

Teachers must be involved in all activities that establish standards (curriculum and student) at the district and school levels. Moreover, it is critical that there is mutual agreement among teachers, administrators and school boards around the learning goals and that all agree to be held accountable to the goals.

- 2a. **Use *Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching* as Connecticut's definition of effective teaching.**

*Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching* (CCT) establishes standards for accomplished practice in teaching, pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students. Expectations for accomplished practice for beginning teachers and experienced teachers should be jointly determined by teachers and administrators in the district.

- 2b. **Show a clear link between the competencies identified in the CCT, the district's teacher evaluation and professional development plan, and improved student learning.**

The teaching competencies in the CCT should be addressed in the design and development of any comprehensive evaluation and professional development system. The evaluation should be organized around the foundational skills and competencies as well as discipline-based professional standards of the CCT.

- Teachers have a knowledge of students, content and pedagogy;
- Teachers apply this knowledge by planning, creating a positive learning environment, instructing, assessing and adjusting; and
- Teachers demonstrate professional responsibility through professional and ethical practice, reflection and continuous learning, collaboration and leadership.

For a more detailed description, see Appendix A.

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<sup>1</sup> Student learning is defined broadly to include teacher and administrator assessment of student work samples, performance measures (i.e., holistic scoring of writing) as well as teacher-designed tests and standardized tests (i.e., CMT and CAPT). In addition, technology should be available to permit teachers to disaggregate data (i.e., using the strategic school profile database) to determine program strengths and weaknesses.

3. **Ensure the district-wide teacher evaluation and professional development plan provides opportunities for educators to receive Continuing Education Units (CEUs) based on work directly related to district goals and objectives for students.**

The districts' CEU offerings shall be purposefully designed to meet the professional development needs of teachers as articulated in the teacher evaluation and professional development plan. The plan should be consistent with state guidelines for the issuance of CEUs and developed jointly by teachers and administrators, under the policy direction of the board of education.

4. **Include a clear, written statement describing the connections among teacher evaluation, curriculum development, professional development and student assessment.**

This statement should be jointly crafted by teachers and administrators and serve to focus the evaluation plan on teaching and learning.

5. **Provide opportunities for self-evaluation by teachers.**

Teachers should evaluate their own performance based upon the district's plan and present evidence to support their self-assessment. This evidence may include documentation of planning, videotapes of teaching, examples of student work, student feedback, documentation of ongoing professional development activities, and examples of collaboration and leadership.

6. **Recognize peer assistance as integral to the ongoing support of teachers in improving teaching and learning.**

Research is clear that teachers learn best from peer support within their field of study. We strongly encourage districts to make time for teachers to provide assistance to their colleagues. Peer assistance requires adequate training and time to perform these very important roles. Among the candidates who might wish to receive this training are National Board-certified teachers, teachers of the year, celebrants and Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program mentors and assessors. Peer support facilitates the development of a community of learners in the school and is one of the best sources of professional development for teachers.

7. **Provide for the training of administrators about the evaluation criteria established by the local school district.**

To have a fair, equitable and credible evaluation and professional development plan, administrators must be trained to assess teachers reliably and fairly across schools and within/across disciplines. Districts must also ensure that teachers are knowledgeable about the evaluation criteria.

8. **Provide for the allocation of time to facilitate teacher evaluation, collaboration and professional growth.**

Time for educators to work together is necessary in order to support a school environment that fosters teacher involvement in the evaluation and professional development process. When collaborative professional development time is built into the daily, weekly or year-long schedule, both educational practice and student learning improves.

9. **Provide for both individual and collaborative evaluation and professional development.**

Teachers have different evaluation and professional development needs. Therefore, the plan should provide choices to teachers that will allow them to meet those needs. A one-size-fits-all plan is not acceptable given the diversity and development of teachers from beginning teachers to national board awardees. All plans must have provisions for identifying both collaborative and individual professional development needs. Individual and collaborative goals for teachers should be closely aligned to student learning goals.

## **II. Key Elements for the Development of a Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development Plan<sup>2</sup>**

1. A clearly written statement of the purpose(s), procedures, responsibilities, timelines and resources needed for implementation of the plan.
2. Evidence of teacher involvement in the design, implementation and evaluation of the plan.
3. Written district goals and objectives for students and related goals for teacher evaluation and professional development.
4. Provision for a process for the gathering and analyzing of data to inform teaching and learning.
5. Provision for presentation of documentation by teachers to support their self-evaluation.
6. Provision for a process to provide feedback that is clear, specific *and constructive*. Feedback should be timely and used at regular intervals to assess progress on district goals and objectives for students.
7. Provision for a process to provide choices for individuals to grow professionally that are differentiated to address different grade configurations, teacher experiences(s) and the specific demands of the content field.

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<sup>2</sup> Note that, pursuant to Section 10-151b, the superintendent shall report the status of teacher evaluations to the local or regional board of education on or before June of each year.

8. Clear procedures for the documentation of professional development through CEUs which are linked to the goals of the individuals' and district's professional development plan.
9. A process for resolving disputes in cases where the evaluator and teacher cannot agree on objectives, the evaluation period, feedback, or the professional development plan.
10. Specification of the length of the evaluation period which may vary for employees with different levels of experience and expertise.
11. Clear and specific steps for placing teachers in intensive supervision and/or for removing a teacher (dismissal). These steps must be designed to meet the due process rights of teachers in cases of continued intensive supervision or dismissal.
  - The intensive supervision phase should include sufficient opportunities for teachers to obtain assistance from peers and administrators and/or participate in special training that is purposefully designed to build the teacher's capacity to meet district standards.
  - A district may opt to refer a teacher who fails to meet the district's minimal standard for teacher performance to an outside agency as a Regional Educational Service Center, college or university, or a CSDE resource bank of trained assessors qualified to provide assistance in improving teaching.
  - Based on an agreed upon timetable, sufficient time must be allocated to enable the teacher an opportunity to improve. Consequences of the teacher's performance must be clearly articulated and all steps taken for either the continuance or dismissal of the teacher must be well documented.



## APPENDIX A

**Sec. 10-145b. Teaching certificates.** (1) (1) For certified employees of local and regional boards of education, except as provided in this subdivision, each professional educator certificate shall be valid for five years and continued every five years thereafter upon the successful completion of professional development activities which shall consist of not less than ninety hours of continuing education, as determined by the local or regional board of education in accordance with this section, during each successive five-year period. Such continuing education completed by (A) the superintendent of schools and (B) employees employed in positions requiring an intermediate administrator or supervisory certificate, or the equivalent thereof, and whose administrative or supervisory duties equal at least fifty per cent of the assigned time of such employee, shall include at least fifteen hours of training in the evaluation of teachers pursuant to section 10-151b during each five-year period. During each five-year period in which a professional educator certificate is valid, a holder of such certificate who has not completed the ninety hours of continuing education required pursuant to the subdivision, and who has not been employed while holding such certificate by a local or regional board of education for all or part of the five-year period, shall, upon application, be reissued such certificate for five years minus any period of time such holder was employed while holding such certificate by a local or regional board of education, provided there shall be only one such reissuance during each five-year period in which such certificate is valid. A certified employee of a local or regional board of education who is a member of the General Assembly and who has not completed the ninety hours of continuing education required pursuant to this subdivision for continuation of his certificate, upon application, shall be reissued a professional educator certificate for a period of time equal to six months for each year he served in the General Assembly during the previous five years. Continuing education hours completed during the previous five years shall be applied toward such ninety-hour requirement which shall be completed during the reissuance period in order for such employee to be eligible to have his certificate continued. The cost of the professional development activities required under this subsection for certified employees of local or regional boards of education shall be shared by the state and local or regional boards of education except for those activities identified by the State Board of Education as the responsibility of the certificate holder. Each local and regional board of education shall make available, annually, at not cost to its certified employees not fewer than eighteen hours of professional development activities for continuing education credit. Such activities may be made available by a board of education directly, through a regional educational service center or cooperative arrangement with another board of education or through arrangements with any continuing education provider approved by the State Board of Education. Local and regional boards of education shall grant continuing education credit for professional development activities which the certified employees of the board of education are required to attend, professional development activities offered in accordance with the plan developed pursuant to subsection (b) of section 10-220a, or professional development activities which the board may approve for any individual certified employee. Each board of education shall determine the specific professional development activities to be made available with the advice and assistance of the teachers employed by such board, including representatives of the exclusive bargaining unit for such teachers pursuant to section 10-153b. The time and location for the provision of such activities shall be in accordance with either an agreement between the board of education and the exclusive bargaining unit pursuant to said section 10-153b or, in the absence of such agreement or to the extent such agreement does not provide for the time and location of all such activities, in accordance with a determination by the board of education.

**Sec. 10-151b. Evaluation by superintendents of certain educational personnel.** (a) The superintendent of each local or regional board of education shall, in accordance with guidelines established by the State Board of Education for the development of evaluation programs and such other guidelines as may be established by mutual agreement between the local or regional board of education

and the teachers' representative chosen pursuant to section 10-153b, continuously evaluate or cause to be evaluated each teacher. An evaluation pursuant to this subsection shall include, but need not be limited to, strengths, areas needing improvement and strategies for improvement. The superintendent shall report the status of teacher evaluations to the local or regional board of education on or before June first of each year. For purposes of this section, the term "teacher" shall include each professional employee of a board of education, below the rank of superintendent, who holds a certificate or permit issued by the State Board of Education.

(b) Each local and regional board of education shall develop and implement teacher evaluation programs consistent with guidelines established by the State Board of Education and consistent with the plan developed in accordance with the provisions of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of Section 10-220a.

**Sec. 10-220a. In-service training. Professional development. Institutes for educators. Cooperating and beginning teacher programs, regulations.** (b) Not later than a date prescribed by the commissioner, each local and regional board of education shall develop, with the advise and assistance of the teachers and administrators employed by such boards, including representatives of the exclusive bargaining representative of such teachers and administrators chosen pursuant to section 10-153b, and such other resources as the board deems appropriate, a comprehensive professional development plan, to be implemented not later than the school year 1994-1995. Such plan shall be directly related to the educational goals prepared by the local or regional board of education pursuant to subsection (b) of section 10-220, and shall provide for the ongoing and systematic assessment and improvement of both teacher evaluation and professional development of the professional staff members of each such board, including personnel management and evaluation training or experience for administrators, shall be related to regular and special student needs and may include provisions concerning career incentives and parent involvement. The State Board of Education shall develop guidelines to assist local and regional boards of education in determining the objectives of the plans and in coordinating staff development activities with student needs and school programs

## Appendix B

### Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching: Foundational Skills and Competencies

#### **I. Teachers have knowledge of:**

##### **A. Students**

1. *Teachers understand how students learn and develop.*
2. *Teachers understand how students differ in their approaches to learning.*

##### **B. Content**

1. *Teachers are proficient in reading, writing and mathematics.*
2. *Teachers understand the central concepts and skills, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) they teach.*

##### **C. Pedagogy**

1. *Teachers know how to design and deliver instruction.*
2. *Teachers recognize the need to vary their instructional methods.*

#### **II. Teachers apply this knowledge by:**

##### **A. Planning**

1. *Teachers plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the curriculum, and the community.*
2. *Teachers select and/or create learning tasks that make subject matter meaningful to students.*

##### **B. Instructing**

1. *Teachers establish and maintain appropriate standards of behavior and create a positive learning environment that shows a commitment to students and their success.*
2. *Teachers create instructional opportunities that support students' academic, social and personal development.*
3. *Teachers use effective verbal, nonverbal and media communications techniques which foster individual and collaborative inquiry.*
4. *Teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies that enable students to think critically, solve problems, and demonstrate skills.*

##### **C. Assessing and adjusting**

1. *Teachers use various assessment techniques to evaluate student learning and modify instruction as appropriate..*

#### **III. Teachers demonstrate professional responsibility through:**

##### **A. Professional and ethical practice**

1. *Teachers conduct themselves as professionals in accordance with the Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers (Section 10-145d-400a of the Certification Regulations).*
2. *Teachers share responsibility for student achievement and well-being.*

##### **B. Reflection and continuous learning**

1. *Teachers continually engage in self-evaluation of the effects of their choices and actions on students and the school community.*
2. *Teachers seek out opportunities to grow professionally.*

##### **C. Leadership and Collaboration**

1. *Teachers serve as leaders in the school community.*
2. *Teachers demonstrate a commitment for their students and passion for improving their profession.*